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ACTION AF-00

INFO LOG-00 NP-00 AID-00 AIT-03 AMAD-00 CIAE-00 COME-00  
INL-00 DINT-00 DODE-00 PERC-00 DS-00 EAP-00 EB-00  
EUR-00 FBIE-00 VC-00 H-00 TEDE-00 INR-00 VCE-00  
M-00 NEA-00 DCP-00 NSAE-00 NIMA-00 PA-00 MCC-00  
GIWI-00 FMPC-00 SSO-00 SS-00 EPAE-00 DSCC-00 PRM-00  
DRL-00 NFAT-00 SAS-00 /003W  
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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0767  
INFO AMEMBASSY ABUJA  
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
AMEMBASSY KAMPALA  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY  
AMEMBASSY PARIS  
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE  
NSC WASHDC  
AIT TAIPEI 0015

C O N F I D E N T I A L NDJAMENA 000058

SIPDIS

NSC FOR AFRICA SENIOR DIRECTOR COURVILLE AND DIRECTOR SWAYNE  
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/15/2015  
TAGS: [BEXP](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [CD](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: CHAD'S PRESIDENT'S SON COMES CALLING

REF: NDJAMENA 2074 AND 1686 (2004)

Classified By: Ambassador Marc M. Wall for reasons 1.4 (b and d).

1. (C) Summary. Chad's President Deby will accept the will of the people expressed in upcoming elections whatever the outcome, according to his son and personal secretary. The Ambassador used the opportunity of a meeting with Brahim Deby to probe into his father's views on staying in power for a third term and flag interest in encouraging a democratic transition. The twenty-something Deby also said his father has tasked him to wrap up a proposal by Globecom Systems for a major fiber optics communications project. The son claimed President Deby is doing well after a medical check-up in France. End Summary.

2. (U) Brahim Deby, President Idriss Deby's eldest son and personal secretary, visited the Ambassador at the Residence January 15. He had requested the meeting to discuss Globecom System's proposal to install a fiber optic communications system in Chad. The discussion in the Residence's garden overlooking the Chari River covered much more.

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Problems with Chad's Former Ambassador  
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3. (C) Deby described his recent visit to Miami, Washington D.C., and New York. He said he had visited Mahamoud Bechir, Chad's new Ambassador in Washington. He mentioned Bechir's recent appearance at the White House for his swearing-in ceremony. He joked about Chad's former Ambassador Soubiane, who remains in Chad's residence in the Washington area where he is seeking to organize an overseas opposition front against President Deby. Soubiane is also widely rumored here to be in cahoots with Khartoum in stirring up an anti-Deby rebellion. Soubiane "isn't stable, it's all about his personal ambition," the younger Deby commented.

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President Deby's Health and Travel Plans  
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3. (C) Brahim Deby said his father, who has spent the last week in France for medical treatment, was undergoing an overdue check-up and is doing fine. The President, he said, is staying on in France to rest and prepare for a visit to Taiwan in the next week or two. He inquired about our impressions of Taiwan. He plans to accompany his father on the trip.

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Interest in Globecom's Fiber Optic Project  
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4. (SBU) Deby said he had been charged by his father to "work something out" on Globecom System's proposal to install a fiber optic communications system. The New York-based

company has proposed a nearly USD 190 million project linking into the fiber optic capacity along the Chad-Cameroon oil pipeline and extending it to the rest of Chad. Deby recalled that the Ambassador had mentioned the project in his last meeting with his father. The Ambassador described the proposal and shared copies of letters and documents Globecom Systems had sent Deby's father. He expressed appreciation for President Deby's interest, agreed with the need to develop Chad's telecommunications links, and suggested Chad complete a technical and financial evaluation of the project. Deby said he would prepare a letter of invitation to Globecom to visit Chad and pursue discussions.

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A Rich and Growing Agenda  
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15. (C) The Ambassador told Deby he welcomes the opportunity to represent the United States in a country where we have such a rich and growing bilateral agenda. He described recent and planned Congressional visits. He noted Darfur, Sudanese refugees, cooperation on counter-terrorism, and Chad's oil revenue management scheme as issues of special

concern. Deby said Chad is eager to cooperate with and has much to learn from the United States. He commented that Chad is a "pioneer" in its plan to manage oil revenues. The Ambassador said the United States also wants to do what it can to strengthen democratic institutions in Chad. Deby cited plans to hold a referendum on revising the constitution to permit his father to stay on in power. He observed that the United States only rarely amended its constitution. The Ambassador noted that the United States had done the reverse of what Chad is preparing to do in how our Constitution treats term limits. In 1951, the United States adopted an amendment to allow the President to serve no more than two terms.

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Broaching Concerns About Presidents-for-Life  
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16. (C) Keying off comments by Chad's Foreign Minister at a dinner with Senator Feingold January 13 (septel), the Ambassador broached the issue of a U.S. visit by President Deby. The son referred to the Corporate Council for Africa's invitation to attend the U.S.-Africa business summit in June. He recalled his father's visit to the Pentagon as Chad's Army Chief of Staff in the eighties. The Ambassador said he would like to encourage Washington to receive his father again, but his ability to do so would depend on what happens with the referendum and the following presidential elections. He said we would respect the outcome of a process conducted freely and transparently. We would also look forward to working together to strengthen cooperation even further. But he stressed that our deepest values as a nation lead us to believe in the importance of putting in place a process for handing power over peacefully. We are uncomfortable with the idea of a "president-for-life," he added.

17. (C) The younger Deby said much has changed in Chad since 1990. The press is free and people can speak out against the government. He said a democratic electoral process would move forward and the government would accept whatever the people decide. He raised concerns about the need to maintain stability. Chad does not want to go the way of Cote d'Ivoire, he said. He did not see anyone else capable of assuming leadership. He also did not think that the U.S. model could be applied directly to Chad. He mentioned that Gabon's President Bongo is seeking a mandate to continue in power.

18. (C) In reply, the Ambassador questioned whether Bongo should be considered a good example. He stressed the need for enlightened leadership in facilitating a democratic transition. He highlighted his respect for President Deby's achievements and his view that Deby has an opportunity to secure his reputation as a leading African statesman. He reiterated that much would depend on what happens over the next six months or year. He said he would welcome the chance to pursue these issues with President Deby. The younger Deby eagerly agreed that such an exchange would be valuable.

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Comment  
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19. (C) The polite and self-effacing manner of Deby's eldest son in this encounter belied his reputation as a rabble-rouser. He has brawled with French soldiers in bar fights in N'Djamena and tangled with the law in Canada over allegedly having issued death threats. His father's move to appoint him personal secretary after his return from his studies in Ottawa last summer raised hackles that the President was trying to groom his son to be his successor. The son, for his part, claims only that he plans to return

overseas to pursue a doctorate in politics or finance. He serves now as perhaps the most direct link to President Deby. We will look for further opportunities to pursue this dialogue with the elder Deby face-to-face.

110. (C) Needless to say, the claim by the son that the father will accept the will of the people voiced in free elections is disingenuous. There is little doubt here that the President will get his way on the referendum to overturn

term limits, even if the voting is free of irregularities. Nor is there doubt that he would win an election for a third five-year term, as he now appears committed to seeking. Our views on his plans would nonetheless not be ignored. As our dialogue with him on this subject deepens, we will need to consider how to use his interest in a visit to Washington to advance our agenda in Chad, including encouraging democratic change.

111. (U) Khartoum and Tripoli minimize considered.  
WALL

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